

# AN African-American

## Perspective

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### Women's History Month: Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune

Born on a farm near Mayesville, South Carolina in 1875, Mary McLeod Bethune, the 15th child of former slaves, rose from humble beginnings to become a world-renowned educator, civil and human rights leader, champion for women and young people, and an advisor to five U.S. presidents.

Education was the first step in her remarkable journey. The young Mary McLeod worked in the fields alongside her parents and siblings, until she enrolled at the age of 10 in the one-room Trinity Presbyterian Mission School. There, she learned to read, and, as she later noted, "the whole world opened to me." She went on to study at Scotia Seminary in North Carolina and Moody Bible Institute in Chicago with the goal of becoming a missionary. When no missionary openings were available, she became a teacher, first at the Haines Institute in Augusta, Georgia and then at the Kendall Institute in Sumpter, South Carolina, where she met and married Albertus Bethune. The dream of opening her own school took Mary McLeod Bethune to Florida – first to Palatka and then to Daytona Beach, where she started the school that would become Bethune-Cookman University.

As she worked to build the school that she founded, she also became a national leader on issues related to civil rights, education, women and young people. As president of the State Federation of Colored Women's Clubs, she organized the group to fight against school segregation and inadequate healthcare for black children. She later served as president of the prestigious National Association of Colored Women's Clubs and founded the National Council of Negro Women. She was appointed to numerous national commissions including the Coolidge Administration's Child Welfare Conference, the Hoover Administration's National Commission on Child Welfare and Commission on Home Building and Home Ownership. She eventually became an advisor on



**Dr. Bethune visited the Bethune-Douglass Recreation Center when it was located on Walnut St. (next to Shiloh Baptist Church) in 1938. You can download her last will and testament at: [www.rcjamesdesign.net/African-American/bethune-will.pdf](http://www.rcjamesdesign.net/African-American/bethune-will.pdf)**

minority affairs in the Roosevelt Administration, organizing two national conferences on the problem of black Americans.

While she gave counsel to presidents and made connections with America's elite, Mary McLeod Bethune was readily accessible to average men and women and the college students that she mothered and mentored. Her access to people of power and privilege was never something she used to benefit herself. It was always an opportunity to gain access for those shut out of opportunities in our society. She enlisted leaders of government and industry to support her vision and dreams – for her school in Daytona Beach, for social justice and positive change for all.

Wherever Dr. Bethune saw a need, she found a way to meet that need and move society closer to

her vision. When a black student was turned away from the hospital in Daytona Beach, she opened a hospital to serve the black community. When the nation mobilized resources for the first and second World Wars, she pressed for the integration of the American Red Cross and Women's Army Auxiliary Corps. She led voter registration drives and anti-lynching campaigns.

Through it all Dr. Bethune relied on faith and prayer for guidance and inspiration, saying, "Without faith, nothing is possible. With it, nothing is impossible."

Mary McLeod Bethune's vision lives on today at the school that she founded which continues to sustain her legacy of faith, scholarship and service. [http://www.bethune.cookman.edu/about\\_BCU/his\\_tory/our\\_founder.html](http://www.bethune.cookman.edu/about_BCU/his_tory/our_founder.html)

# Happy 100th Birthday! National Urban League.

## *National Urban League's History.*

The National Urban League, which has played so pivotal a role in the 20th-Century Freedom Movement, grew out of that spontaneous grassroots movement for freedom and opportunity that came to be called the Black Migrations. When the U.S. Supreme Court declared its approval of segregation in the 1896 Plessy v. Ferguson decision, the brutal system of economic, social and political oppression the White South quickly adopted rapidly transformed what had been a trickle of African Americans northward into a flood.

Those newcomers to the North soon discovered they had not escaped racial discrimination. Excluded from all but menial jobs in the larger society, victimized by poor housing and education, and inexperienced in the ways of urban living, many lived in terrible social and economic conditions.

Still, in the degree of difference between South and North lay opportunity, and that African Americans clearly understood. But to capitalize on that opportunity, to successfully adapt to urban life and to reduce the pervasive discrimination they faced, they would need help. That was the reason the Committee on Urban Conditions Among Negroes was established on September 29, 1910 in New York City. Central to the organization's founding were two remarkable people: Mrs. Ruth Standish Baldwin and Dr. George Edmund Haynes, who would become the Committee's first executive secretary.

Mrs. Baldwin, the widow of a railroad magnate and a member of one of America's oldest families, had a remarkable social conscience and was a stalwart champion of the poor and disadvantaged. Dr. Haynes, a graduate of Fisk University, Yale University, and Columbia University (he was the first African American to receive a doctorate from that institution), felt a compelling need to use his training as a social worker to serve his people.

A year later, the Committee merged with the Committee for the Improvement of Industrial Conditions Among Negroes in New York (founded in New York in 1906), and the National League for the Protection of Colored Women (founded in 1905) to form the National League on Urban Conditions Among Negroes. In 1920, the name was later shortened to the National Urban League.

The interracial character of the League's board was set from its first days. Professor Edwin R. A.

Seligman of Columbia University, one of the leaders in progressive social service activities in New York City, served as chairman from 1911 to 1913. Mrs. Baldwin took the post until 1915.

The fledgling organization counseled black migrants from the South, helped train black social workers, and worked in various other ways to bring educational and employment opportunities to blacks. Its research into the problems blacks faced in employment opportunities, recreation, housing, health and sanitation, and education spurred the League's quick growth. By the end of World War I the organization had 81 staff members working in 30 cities.

In 1918, Dr. Haynes was succeeded by Eugene Kinckle Jones who would direct the agency until his retirement in 1941. Under his direction, the League significantly expanded its multifaceted campaign to crack the barriers to black employment, spurred first by the boom years of the 1920s, and then, by the desperate years of the Great Depression. Efforts at reasoned persuasion were buttressed by boycotts against firms that refused to employ blacks, pressures on schools to expand vocational opportunities for young people, constant prodding of Washington officials to include blacks in New Deal recovery programs and a drive to get blacks into previously segregated labor unions.

As World War II loomed, Lester Granger, a seasoned League veteran and crusading newspaper columnist, was appointed Eugene Kinckle Jones successor.

Outspoken in his commitment to advancing opportunity for blacks, Granger pushed tirelessly to integrate the racist trade unions and led the League's effort to support A. Philip Randolph's March on Washington Movement to fight discrimination in defense work and in the armed services. Under Granger, the League, through its own Industrial Relations Laboratory, had notable success in cracking the color bar in numerous defense plants. The nation's demand for civilian labor during the war also helped the organization press ahead with greater urgency its programs to train black youths for meaningful blue-collar employment. After the war those efforts expanded to persuading Fortune 500 companies to hold career conferences on the campuses of Negro colleges and place blacks in upper-echelon jobs.

Of equal importance to the League's own future

sources of support, Granger avidly supported the organization of its volunteer auxiliary, the National Urban League Guild, which, under the leadership of Mollie Moon, became an important national force in its own right.

The explosion of the civil rights movement provoked a change for the League, one personified by its new leader, Whitney M. Young, Jr., who became executive director in 1961. A social worker like his predecessors, he substantially expanded the League's fund-raising ability and, most critically, made the League a full partner in the civil rights movement. Although the League's tax-exempt status barred it from protest activities, it hosted at its New York headquarters the planning meetings of A. Philip Randolph, Martin Luther King, Jr., and other civil rights leaders for the 1963 March on Washington. Young was also a forceful advocate for greater government and private-sector efforts to eradicate poverty. His call for a domestic Marshall Plan, a ten-point program designed to close the huge social and economic gap between black and white Americans, significantly influenced the discussion of the Johnson Administration's War on Poverty legislation.

Young's tragic death in 1971 in a drowning incident off the coast of Lagos, Nigeria brought another change in leadership. Vernon E. Jordan, Jr., formerly Executive Director of the United Negro College Fund, took over as the League's fifth Executive Director in 1972 (the title of the office was changed to President in 1977). For the next decade, until his resignation in December 1981, Jordan skillfully guided the League to new heights of achievement. He oversaw a major expansion of its social service efforts, as the League became a significant conduit for the federal government to establish programs and deliver services to aid urban communities, and brokered fresh initiatives in such League programs as housing, health, education and minority business development. Jordan also instituted a citizenship education program that helped increase the black vote and brought new programs to such areas as energy, the environment, and non-traditional jobs for women of color and he developed The State of Black America report.

In 1982, John E. Jacob, a former chief executive officer of the Washington, D.C. and San Diego affiliates who had served as Executive Vice President, took the reins of leadership, solidifying the

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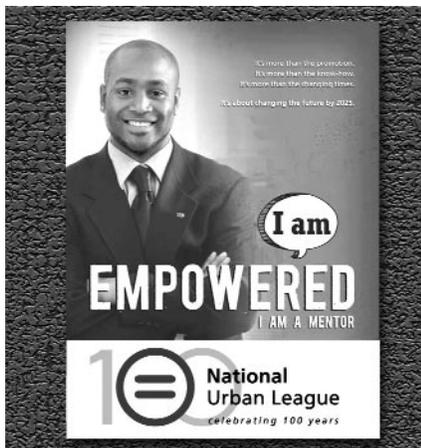
League's internal structure and expanding its outreach even further.

Jacob established the Permanent Development Fund in order to increase the organization's financial stamina. In honor of Whitney Young, he established several programs to aid the development of those who work for and with the League: The Whitney M. Young, Jr. Training Center, to provide training and leadership development opportunities for both staff and volunteers; the Whitney M. Young, Jr. Race Relations Program, which recognizes affiliates doing exemplary work in race relations; and the Whitney M. Young, Jr. Commemoration Ceremony, which honors and pays tribute to long term staff and volunteers who have made extraordinary contributions to the Urban League Movement.

Jacob established the League's NULITES youth development program and spurred the League to put new emphasis on programs to reduce teenage pregnancy, help single female heads of households, combat crime in black communities, and increase voter registration. Hugh B. Price, appointed to the League's top office in July 1994, took over the reins at a critical moment for the League, for black America, and for the nation as a whole. In the early 90's, the fierce market-driven dynamic of "globalization," was sweeping the world, fundamentally altering

the economic relations among and within countries and reshaping the link between the nation's citizenry and its economy, fostering enormous uncertainty among individuals and tensions among ethnic and cultural groups.

This economic change and the efforts of some to rollback the gains African Americans fashioned since the 1960s made the League's efforts all the more necessary. Price, a lawyer with extensive



Go to [www.nul.org](http://www.nul.org) for info.

experience in community development and public policy issues, intensified the organization's work in three broad areas: in education and youth development, individual and community-wide economic empowerment, affirmative action and the promotion of inclusion as a critical foundation for securing America's future as a multi-ethnic democracy.

Among Price's most notable achievements was establishing the League's Institute of Opportunity and Equality in Washington, DC, which conducted research and public policy analysis of urban issues and the Campaign for African American Achievement, a community mobilization and advocacy initiative created to raise awareness and promote the importance of achievement through the formation of the National Achievers Society, "Doing the Right Thing" recognition in local communities and the National Urban League's Scholarship Program.

On May 15, 2003 the Board of Trustees of the National Urban League voted overwhelmingly to appoint former New Orleans Mayor Marc H. Morial as the League's eighth President and Chief Executive Officer. As New Orleans Chief Executive, he was one of the most popular and effective mayors in the city's history, leaving office with 70% approval rating. After being elected as one of the youngest mayors in the city's history, crime plummeted by 60% a corrupt Police Department was reformed, new programs for youth were started and stagnant economy was reignited.

Since his appointment to the National Urban League, Morial has worked to reenergize the movement's diverse constituencies by building on the strengths of the NUL's 95 year old legacy and increasing the organization's profile both locally and nationally.

In his first year, Morial worked to streamline the organization's headquarters, secured over \$10 million dollars in new funding to support affiliate programs, created the first Legislative Policy Conference "NUL on the Hill", revamped the State of Black America report, created profitability for the annual conference, and secured a \$127.5 million equity fund for minority businesses through the new markets tax credit program. He introduced and developed a stronger strategic direction of the organization with a "five point empowerment agenda" that focuses on closing the equality gaps which exist for African Americans and other emerging ethnic communities in education, economic empowerment, health and quality of life, civic engagement, and civil rights and racial justice.

## National Urban League, NAACP Focuses on Jobs.

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Feb. 10, 2010) – National Urban League President and CEO Marc H. Morial today called for a stronger focus on employment counseling, job creation and direct aid to public employers during a meeting today with President Barack Obama.

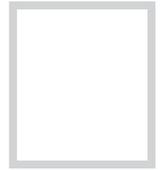
"The crisis of unemployment and underemployment among urban and minority communities has reached a devastating level and it continues to deepen," Morial said. "While the overall picture appears to be brightening, we cannot allow it to blind us to the worsening situation for black

Americans. I believe our meeting today with President Obama has focused his attention more solidly on the plight of these neglected communities."

Morial characterized the meeting as "very positive," and said President Obama was "engaged and sensitive to the challenges facing the most vulnerable in our society." "We are going to press the Congress to add more targeted provisions to the jobs bill," Morial said. Morial said the jobless rate for black men last month, 17.6% and rising, is approaching the worst of the Great Depression,

when nearly one in four Americans were unemployed. The percentage of white men unemployed in January was 9.1%.

"I'm grateful for the opportunity to present our case to President Obama and articulate our specific plans to address the unemployment crisis," said Morial, who was joined in the meeting by the Rev. Al Sharpton, and NAACP President Benjamin Jealous. "His firm leadership over the last year has staved off a greater catastrophe and I have faith he is taking the country in a healing direction." For more information visit [www.nul.org](http://www.nul.org).



## Upcoming Events

### March 20th -

As part of the Juneteenth Celebration Association's mentoring program, "J.C. Talking Point", the organization will host a workshop entitled "Respect Yourself" presented by Rev. Marwin C. Reeves on March 20, 2010 at 12 noon at the Curtin Middle School in Williamsport. The topic is leadership. Rev. Reeves is an ordained pastor at Christ Community Worship Center and is a Specialty Program Specialist at the Federal Penitentiary in Lewisburg, PA. He is pursuing a Master of Divinity and Pastoral Counseling degree from Liberty University. He has been a juvenile case manager, youth counselor and police officer. After the presentation an art workshop will be held from 1pm to 3:30pm.

Bring family and friends, the presentation is free and open to the public. Light refreshments will be served. For more information about this event or other scheduled workshops, call Conni Robinson at 570-419-2502. Or [www.JuneteenthCelebration.org](http://www.JuneteenthCelebration.org).



### March 27th -

Here's the official solicitation from the Center (formerly known as the Bethune Douglas Center. It was named after Mary McLeod Bethune and Frederick Douglass. See page 1 for info about Dr. Bethune.)

"Just wanted to remind you of our upcoming 'Spring Bling' Auction on Saturday, March 27th, from 1 to 3 p.m. (please see the attached flyer). We hope you, your family, and friends will join us for 2 fun-filled hours of beautiful new handbags, jewelry, a variety of accessories, and even some vintage pieces! Admission is only \$3 and light refreshments will be served. Please come support The Center during this fundraiser...we hope to see you all on the 27th!"

Visit [www.auctionzip.com](http://www.auctionzip.com) for details and to view photos (click on Pennsylvania, type in 17701 Zip Code, click on March 27 day on calendar, then go to the T&S Auction page.)



### And coming May 8th -

Get ready people. The CAPP A Showcase 2010 "Empowering the Next Generation" will do its thing once again at the Community Arts Center. Admission is \$8.00. A portion of the proceeds will benefit the victims of the Haiti Earthquake disaster. Doors open at 5pm.

This year's showcase will be a little different. The popular local band, "Loni Gamble and Sound Cheque - Sugar and Spice" will be performing. It should be a great show!

If you want to know more about the showcase and where to get tickets call the CAC box office at 570-326-2424 or call CAPP A at 570-326-7700.

Be there or be square.

